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ABSTRACT

This booklet, published by the Workshop Center for Open Education, contains eight articles on open education and teacher centers. The first article, providing background information on the Workshop Center, emphasizes the need for distribution of information to teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, and parents on open or informal education in the New York City area. The second article deals with the teacher center as an agent of change; the third speaks of the commitment to innovation by the teacher center. The fourth and fifth articles emphasize the importance of a coordinated staff and the broadened scope of responsibility of the teacher center. The sixth article presents changes in the primary schools which would necessitate changes in the roles of teachers. The seventh article contains notes from the advisor to a second-grade classroom in an open corridor school. The final article presents the parent's view of the open corridor design. Included in the booklet are a list of Workshop Center publications. (BRB)

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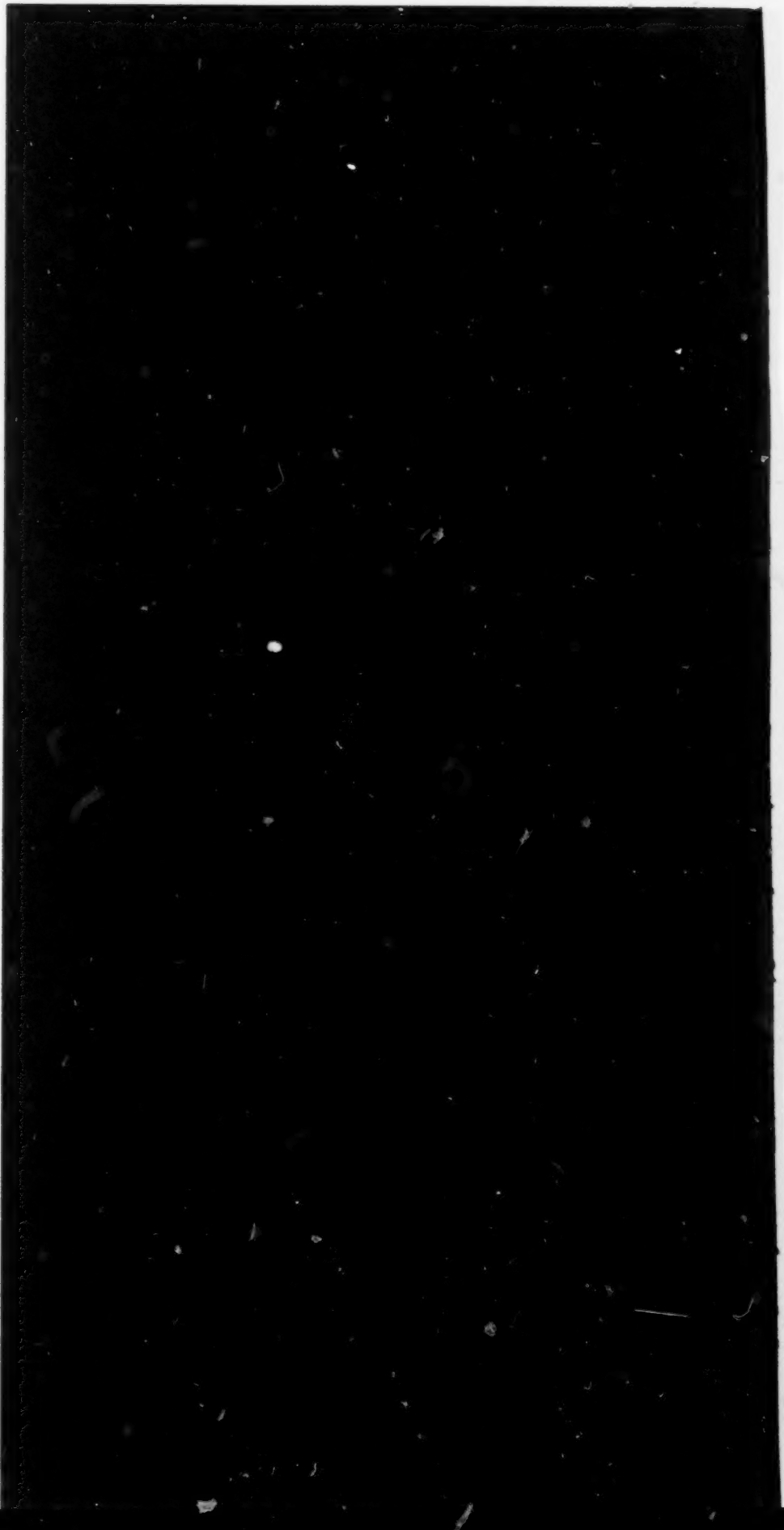

Letter from the director

It is clear by now that the Workshop Center for Open Education has met a need. From opening day, October 28, 1972, to this writing, nearly 4,000 people--teachers, administrators, supervisors, paraprofessionals, graduate and undergraduate students, parents (even grandparents)--have made their way along the ground floor corridor of Shepard Hall at City College to Rooms 3, 4, and 6 where Center staff have transformed three cavernous rooms into a new space that beckons and invites use. But beyond this, how has the Center contributed to our more considered goal: deepening the support structure of teacher development in New York City?

Intended as a logical next step in the many-sided support structure which I and the City College Advisory Service to Open Corridors have been building for teacher development over the last five years, the Center, for one thing, has offered opportunities for teachers now functioning autonomously to select experiences that carry forward the continuity of their development. Additionally, it has offered the beginning experiences and support to those teachers initiating change without on-site advisory support, as well as to paraprofessionals, parents, administrators, and supervisors. To the extent that we set out to begin to do just those things, we have indeed been successful.

Preparation involved us in decisions very similar to those made by an open education teacher changing a traditional classroom and for similar reasons. We too wanted to make provision for individual differences. We wanted to provide for the diversity of the participants' interests, needs, and stages of development. We wanted to provide for browsing, for free exploration, for talk, for direct demonstration. We wanted to share with others the account of our difficulties and successes in change.

In the context of such multiple reference, we had to offer both a center and workshops--a *place* for

autonomous sustained enquiry as well as single specifically focused workshops. Actually we have offered a combination of experiences--a continuum moving from demonstrations, single workshops, to the series which provides some depth in a curricular area. This continuum extends from opportunities for sporadic individual exploration to sustained enquiry. Some individuals used the place and the materials, others needed to consult with staff to gain confirmation of what they had done or suggestions for future work.

The combination we have developed is an amalgam, in which neither curriculum content nor problems of school and classroom reorganization have been central. Some participants have needed to reorder their store of content in basic areas--math, science, language--some to explore new possibilities. Some have wanted to join together in shared study of questions relating to language development and reading. Others have wanted to discuss the external pressure for accountability in reading performance. Some have found in new companionship and shared experience the kind of support that relieved their anxiety about change. Others, not seeking immediate use, found relaxation and renewal in participating in dance, photography, and talk.

For all participants the resources at the Center for new curriculum content will continue to be important because the teacher discarding the prescribed curriculum as inappropriate must answer the question: What content *is* appropriate? We foresee that teachers will more and more as individuals or as groups take over the construction and reconstruction of the environments and curricula so as to reflect the interests and support the synthesis of understandings this or that individual child is making, and that they will more and more make their own selections of what they need for this task.

We think the continuum of need will remain. Within compulsory education, external bureaucratic constraints on the teacher's exercise of curricular judgment exist and are likely to remain, however uneven in impact. Teachers who become uneasy with mismatch risk much when they break with the old organizational mold and relationships. Their search for new ways needs support--from advisor, from fellow teachers, from teacher centers.

Our transition from workshop to permanent center presented unexpected difficulties. The permanent center could be more than a place housing a col-

lection of workshops. Even though its definition *included* workshops, the Center itself must not be defined as a workshop. The Center offered workshops but these could be conceived and prepared for in a different manner. All staff were used to giving workshops, for which they gathered materials, considered needs, and prepared for variations of use around what they considered important questions. Such workshops tended to be one-shot, isolated events. At the Center, the opportunity existed to utilize these preparations for more than one-shot workshops; preparations for one workshop could be used to add to the accumulation of material available for multiple uses--for individual use defined by the needs of the individual, for the reexperiencing of the workshop experience by individuals, as well as for group use in workshops. Workshop preparation had to be reoriented to make available materials at the Center from which selection could be made quickly for a specific workshop. Such preparation would increase enormously the number and variety of possible workshops.

There were additional factors to be considered. The separate workshop pattern offered limited opportunities for including participants in preparation, organization, and in care and return of materials for use by others. The workshop leader took all or major responsibility for these before-and-after aspects. Availability was at first interpreted as availability for staff preparations. Staff feared for loss of materials, feared that the drop-in nature of participation increased the chances of loss. Exactly as with a teacher in an open classroom, accessibility of materials presented risk and difficulty, but it has been achieved--bit by bit. As participants became habitues and identified the Center as *their* place, previous fears were dissipated, but it is still true that participant assistance in reconstructing the working environment and making it again available remains minimal. This aspect is accentuated in many workshops led by invited experts rather than by Center staff.

Use of outside experts allowed us time to define ourselves in other ways, but what I have said plus the isolated one-shot character of even the wonderful experiences provided by these experts must be weighed for future planning. The continuing basic atmosphere and identity of the Center must be defined by its regular staff, joined by College faculty who increasingly are associated with the Center, whether as volunteers or even on assign-

ment, and by the expert teachers who have made their use of and contribution to the Center habitual. More and more of these teachers are leading workshops and forming discussion groups. The browsing participant, the reexperiencing participant, the participant seeking deeper experience will only relate to staff whom they identify with the Center. It is this context of continuity and identity that is needed to provide for the continuum from beginning teacher to teacher using the Center autonomously.

Our combination of functions as Center and as workshop led us also to reconsider staff roles and to raise new questions on staff selection and development. Workshops and curriculum development institutes, focused on content and materials, had drawn on the talents and flexibilities of a staff, often young and with little experience in schools. On the other hand, advisors, responsible for assisting teachers in creating new school supports for children's development, were chosen because of their understanding of school relationships, classroom organizational dynamics, and the developmental process they were seeking to support. More than anything else they need to be mature and generous in support of the teachers' development. We knew that different expertise characterized the advisor and the workshop leader, and we hoped by offering some school experience to the staff member and some workshop experience to the advisor to extend both thereby. This has happened, but the advisor role and workshop leader role are *not* interchangable, and for our needs we have representation from both roles.

Problems remain. The leap to existence was on a level of high quality and professionalism. But with funding now uncertain, some aspects of superstructure may change. In both our school efforts and our supports for teacher development we have sought minimal, simple structures. These will derive stability from those who work with them in the process of thinking through their problems. In the schools we hope that increasingly the teacher communities will support each other, that schools and districts will facilitate teacher development, move further toward a view of advisement instead of supervision, and accept the commitment, even financially, for such support. Equally, in the long run the existence of the Center can be assured only if its contribution to teacher development is entirely evident to City College and to its teacher, parent, and administrator users. Our future is in that direction.

Lillian Weber

Change and teacher centers

Charles E. Silberman

The author of Crisis in the Classroom *gave this talk to the Workshop Center's Advisory Council at a special meeting held on April 11, 1973, launching a campaign for continuation of the Center's Title III funding. Mr. Silberman is the editor of* The Open Classroom Reader, *which will be published next month by Random House-Vintage Books.*

There is no need to document the failures of the public schools or even to try to lay out what kinds of changes are needed. What I'd like to do is emphasize that teachers, no less than students, it seems to me, are defeated and victimized by the way in which most schools are at present organized and run. Certainly little in the way those schools operate suggests respect for teachers as teachers or as human beings. The shabbiness of the physical environment in which most teachers work is exceeded only by the shrillishness of their social environment. There's an atmosphere of meanness and distrust--symbolized by the time clock which teachers punch as if they were workers on an assembly line.

Christopher Jencks has written that school systems are institutions held together by mutual distrust. The public distrusts the school board, the school board distrusts the superintendent, the superintendent distrusts the principals, the principals distrust the teachers, and the teachers distrust the children. It works that way in reverse. And this we have to overcome. The conditions of work themselves provide no time for reflection or privacy. In my old office at *Fortune* magazine where I worked for 18 years, office boys and mail clerks

were treated with more dignity and respect than most teachers are now. Worst of all is the fact that teachers are rarely consulted about the things that concern them most: the content of the curriculum, the selection of books and learning materials, and the identification of goals.

There is a commonality of interests between teachers and students that recent events have tended to obscure. "If we had a proper system of education," John Dewey wrote, "nothing would appear more extraordinary than the assumption that students are naturally averse to learning and have to be either browbeaten or coaxed into action." If we had a proper system of education, I would add, nothing would appear more extraordinary than the assumption, also commonly made, that teachers are naturally averse to teaching, and that they, therefore, have to be browbeaten or coaxed into action. I'm persuaded that the reverse is true. I'm saying that the self-fulfilling prophecy works for teachers as well as for students. When teachers are placed in an atmosphere of freedom and trust, when teachers are treated as professionals and as people of worth, they respond accordingly and appear as the caring, concerned people that most teachers are and really want to be. The lesson of the educational reform movement of the 1950s and 1960s is that in any case the schools cannot be reformed unless classroom teachers are deeply and intimately involved in the process. Reform is not a process that can be imposed from the top down--a mistake we've made in this country over and over again.

Lawrence Cremer, of Teachers College, has written, "Education is too significant and dynamic an enterprise to be left to mere technicians. We might as well begin now the prodigious task of preparing men and women who understand not only the substance of what they are teaching but also the theory behind the particular strategy they employ to convey that substance." A society committed to the continuing intellectual, asthetic, and moral growth of all of its members cannot afford less on the part of those who undertake to teach. That means that we need radical changes not only in the way schools are organized but the ways in which teachers are educated.

One of the characteristics that distinguish teacher education from education for other professions is the fact that the preparation of teachers begins not in college but in kindergarten or the first grade. Prospective lawyers, doctors,

accountants, or engineers generally enter a professional school with a romantic and usually quite inaccurate conception of what being a lawyer, or a doctor, or an engineer entails. Students planning to teach, on the other hand, approach their education with a relatively accurate picture of what teachers do. Their picture is relatively accurate because they have spent some 10,000 hours in direct contact with elementary and secondary school teachers by the time they begin their first year of college. That's precisely why teachers require a new kind of education. Teachers could at least start out with a relatively accurate picture of what most teachers do. What most teachers do as you know is not what they should be doing. Unless teachers are given alternative pictures of what teaching and learning can be, unless they are given the necessary techniques and methods, unless they gain the theoretical understanding of why new methods, new approaches are needed, they are almost bound to teach the same way that their teachers taught them.

Dr. Edward Chittenden of the Educational Testing Service, one of the most sensitive students of open education, has suggested that there are two rather different kinds of changes that teachers have to make in order to shift from the traditional classroom role at the front of the room (the English call it the Chalk and Talk Method of Teaching) to more open, more informal styles of teaching: (1) They have to drastically change the way in which they look at children, and (2) they have to drastically change the conception of their own role. Chittenden suggests that one of the differences between the United States and England is that with a long tradition of teacher autonomy in England teachers find it relatively easy to change the conception of their own role, and it is rather difficult to change the way in which they look at children. For American teachers it's the other way around. It's much easier to change the way they look at children because for all the authoritarianism of the public schools we never fully abandoned the rhetoric--the child-centered rhetoric--of the progressive period. If we don't treat children as individuals, if we don't respond to individual children's individual needs, if we don't try to meet each child at the point he's at, we at least thought with this rhetoric that we did. And so there is no great psychological break when teachers begin to change. In a real sense they are returning to what they had been taught to do, what they had always really

wanted to do, but what the organization of a traditional formal classroom prevented them from doing.

Changing the conception of their own role is much more difficult, because nothing in our own tradition really prepares teachers to be autonomous. Nothing prepares teachers to make all the decisions that a teacher needs to make, to choose all the materials that go into the room, to decide which approach to reading will be used, to decide how much emphasis to place in each subject area, to decide how to arrange the room, what kinds of things to put in the room. Our tradition of the teacher's autonomy is quite different. Where teachers have managed to get a great deal of responsibility in our school system it tends to mean that they are able to select which of two or three textbook series they are going to use and they are able to decide whether to cover the whole syllabus with equal steps or spend a little bit more time on some parts. Or they may be able to decide whether to use the canned tests that the publisher provides or to prepare their own tests. It is far more difficult to change to the very different role of choosing, and of autonomy, and of guiding all the children in the class in their individual choices.

I think the rhetoric of the last few years--the whole free school movement--has tended to compound the difficulties because we tend to think of the shift in the teacher's role as moving from authority to the disappearance of authority, instead of thinking of it in terms of abandonment of authoritarianism for a much more natural and democratic form of authority. Teachers who have made the change have had the greatest difficulty in deciding on what position of the pendulum they are going to end up. They tend to swing too far--to be afraid that if they ever give a child a single direction, or if they simply say 'no' to a child--they are going to get back in that same old authoritarian groove.

For most teachers this change is very difficult; it takes a long time to make and requires an enormous amount of guidance and support. That is why workshops, in-service, continuing education are profoundly more important than pre-service education which traditionally has received the bulk of the resources, the bulk of the time, the bulk of the interest. Robert Shaeffer of Teachers College, in his terribly important but much ignored little book, *School: The Center of Inquiry*, has

written: "It is trivial to argue about the degree of knowledge necessary to begin this teaching while we ignore the crucial question of how teachers can continue to learn throughout their careers." Teachers need to be able to come to workshops, to get the kind of help that is provided here in the Workshop Center for Open Education--beginning with concrete problems, beginning with where the teacher is at, providing specific resources to deal with specific problems, but extending a teacher's learning beyond that so that teachers begin to think about 'why am I doing what I'm doing' 'what is it that I really want to accomplish' 'what do I want for my children' 'what are going to be the consequences of what I'm doing.' Unless teachers can receive the continuing support that's being provided here it is painfully difficult to make the kind of changes that need to be made. And what all too often tends to happen--what I'm beginning to see happen in school after school--is that teachers begin to change, they try opening up in the classroom, but nobody is there to provide support, nobody is there to provide very concrete assistance with materials and goals, nobody is there to say, "It's all right to be scared. There would be something wrong with you if you weren't a little scared, a little nervous in shifting your role so radically."

Without this kind of support open education tends to turn into chaos. Teachers discover that kids are simply running around. Parents begin to complain that nothing seems to be happening. The kids are having a good time. But kids don't even have a good time for very long if they don't feel that they are accomplishing something, if they are not really learning something. And then the response on the part of the teachers and on the part of the community is, "Well, that won't work so we have to go back to the old method." And so, in fact, that--whatever it is--which no one fully understood anyway has never really been tried because no one has had the kind of assistance that is needed. So I think workshops, advisory services, the kinds of publications that are coming out of the Center--all of these are absolutely essential if schools are to change in the proper direction.

For those who are impatient about how slowly things seem to be changing, my own perspective perhaps is helpful. When I was finishing writing *Crisis in the Classroom*, Lillian Weber was working on four or five classrooms in two schools

in District 3. This year she has 20 Advisors and Advisor Trainees in 117 classrooms in 13 schools. There are interns from Brownsville, Bedford-Stuyvesant, South Bronx. And I think equally as impressive as the statistics on the number of workshop participants, some 3,700 from November through April, are the numbers of different schools from which the teachers, paraprofessionals, and parent groups have come. The degree to which that little tiny beginning of four or five years ago has begun to affect the way in which teachers, parents, administrators think about education in New York City--the way in which those beginnings have affected the way in which teachers and parents all over the United States think about education--is nothing short of miraculous, given the incredible resistance to change that institutions tend to have. So that it simply would be a tragedy for New York City, it would be a tragedy for the United States if the Workshop Center for Open education had to close.

I am in fairly close touch with what's going on in public education in a good many parts of the United States, and I don't know of a public school system anywhere where the kind of coordinated, thought-through approach to reforms that is going on here is going on. There are good teacher centers in other cities--in other parts of the country--but with a handful of exceptions they are outside the public school system. All of the cases that I can think of are outside a school of education except for some nominal connection that is required because the foundation or government money is funnelled through the college or university to the teacher center or workshop. I don't know of any that is as closely and deeply woven into the life of the School of Education, as this Center is. It is the most important one of its kind in the United States. If we are to salvage the schools--which means if we are to salvage our children--this Center and the work of this Center has got to continue.

Readers who want the Workshop Center for Open Education to continue are urged to send letters, expressing this view and stressing the need for continuing Title III funding, to the following legislators:

Senator Harrison A. Williams, Jr.
Chairman, Labor & Public Welfare Committee
Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C. 20510

Senator Claiborne A. Pell
Chairman, Sub-Committee on Education
Labor & Public Welfare Committee
Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C. 20510

Senator Jacob Javits
911 Park Avenue
New York, N. Y. 10021

Senator James Buckley
Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C. 20510

Representative Carl Perkins
Chairman, Education & Labor Committee
House Office Building
Washington, D. C. 20510
AND the following Committee Members:
Herman Badillo
Mario Biaggi
Shirley Chisholm
Jack Kemp
Peter Peyser

Representative Edith Green
Chairman, Special Sub-Committee on Education
House Office Building
Washington, D. C. 20510

A new commitment

Doyle M. Bortner

Dr. Bortner is Dean of the School of Education at The City College of the City University of New York. He delivered the following greetings at the formal opening of the Workshop Center for Open Education on October 28, 1972.

Too often the major concern of the school is with teaching whereas it should be with learning. Too often the major concern of the teacher has been with filling little mugs from his big jug of knowledge, and, concurrently, the concern of the student has been with consuming whereas concerns of both should be with inquiring, discovering, producing. Too often the major concern of the supervisor of instruction has been of a 2 x 4 variety, that is confined to the two covers of the textbook and the four walls of the classroom whereas it should be expanded to include the realities of the community in which learning takes place and to include the ebb and flow of daily interests and problems of the student. Too often the major concern of school administrators has been with responsiveness and accountability to the board of education and the central office whereas it should be with responsiveness and accountability to the student. Too often the major concern of school organization and structure seems to have been the processing of children through a factory-like mass production scheme that turns raw material into standardized, graded units whereas the major concern should be with the total development of each child in terms of his uniqueness.

It seems to me that the commitment of open education, including its embodiment in the Workshop

Center for Open Education, is to the reversal of these concerns. As I see it, this Workshop Center, organized in conjunction with the City College Advisory Service to Open Corridors and in consistency with the philosophy of the Department of Elementary Education of our School of Education, is committed not to teaching children in the traditional sense but to removing obstacles, inciting interests, encouraging natural motivations, making resources available, and otherwise providing the setting for children to learn for themselves. As I see it, this Workshop Center is committed to the belief that failures of schools in educating children have little relationship to difficulty of learning tasks but have much relationship to their overlooking the need to engage and harness the natural energies and interests of children in tackling learning tasks. And, as I see it, this Center is committed to the proposition that our teacher education program cannot successfully take place *in* an urban, inner city setting unless it is also a part *of* that setting. In this latter connection, the challenge that faces the faculty of the City College School of Education is one of institutionalizing the values of this program and, indeed, other current programs once support through special funding no longer exists.

A coordinator's notes

Georgia Delano

Webster gives no definition for the noun "coordinator" beyond the usual "one who coordinates." The work of coordinator in making the Title III funded City College Advisory Service Workshop Center for Open Education (our full title) operative has two aspects: internal and external. For the first, it might be more significant to consider Webster's definition of the adjective "coordinate," namely, "equal in rank, quality or significance," so far as staff relations are concerned. For the second, we should consider the definition of the infinitive "to coordinate," that is, "to bring into a common action, movement or condition: HARMONIZE--vi: to be or become coordinate esp. so as to act together in a smooth concerted way"--in other words, making possible the Center's continued existence through dealings with the bureaucracy.

I believe it is crucial for all of us working for open education to remember our own roots and our own school experiences. We must face the fact that, while we work for a community of "coordinates," this community does not blossom overnight but only as we rework our own pasts with an openness to a variety of life styles and talents among those with whom we work. As the coordinator of the Workshop Center for Open Education this is my primary concern: to create with my coordinates an atmosphere at the workshop where the various talents of staff are appreciated and used but also where unknown gifts of staff will have a chance to develop.

This is after all what we seek in open corridor communities, a pooling of the resources of school personnel, parents, and teachers in order to make school life more interesting and fulfilling for all participants. No thing has given me more satisfaction, for example, than the plan for open classroom storage space drawn up by a custodian in one of the public schools where we work; he had attended one of our workshops for school personnel (principals, supervisors, advisors, custodians) where we had shown a film of some old school buildings in England which were changed over to informal education. He immediately saw possibilities in his own school and went to work on the storage project. Anyone involved in open education knows how pivotal custodians' attitudes are. Whenever a custodian begins to contribute, the sense of community in the school grows.

This sense of community, this atmosphere, which we seek to develop in open corridor schools is vital to the life of the Workshop Center. In visiting ordinary schools and teacher training institutions, I have been struck by the horror of the environment in which would-be teachers, teachers and children spend their time. *Barren, bleak, sterile, ugly* are not exaggerated adjectives to use in description. Discarded calendars, old announcements or bare walls provide the settings. Open classrooms are by contrast sheer delight: children's paintings, stories, sculpture, plants are everywhere visible.

At the Workshop Center we tried from the very beginning to create a place which was visually satisfying for those who have made teaching their life. How can one expect teachers to create warm, lovely, stimulating environments for children if the places where they take their training are drab, dull, and depressing?

Setting up the Workshop Center was an enterprise in which all Workshop staff and volunteer teachers, parents, paraprofessionals, and administrators participated. It was a good example of developing action: a color scheme was worked out, everyone painted, shopping was parceled out, cupboards arranged, rooms furnished, storage shelves built, windows washed in an extraordinarily harmonious effort. The night before the official opening, the editors and secretaries put together a supper feast served in the corridor where children's work contributed from open corridor schools was being hung. City College custodial staff, who had been very helpful, joined the festivities. It

was a good beginning! It set the tone of the Workshop Center.

Of course even before the Workshop Center opened, the Director had worked with the staff on dividing major responsibilities for the functioning of the Workshop Center. This is particularly important for flexible institutional arrangements that will avoid wasteful duplication of activity. The editor and managing editor quite clearly were responsible for editorial and publication work. The four full-time advisors with part-time advisors took major responsibility for particular areas such as scheduling, library, consultation, audiovisual, language, science, math, carpentry, music, and art. One secretary was primarily involved in publication activity, one in reception, attendance, and letter-writing, and one in the bookkeeping and practical procurement of supplies ordered by the staff. The Coordinator was to be liaison with the State and City offices through which the Workshop is funded, writing the necessary reports and doing the paperwork of the bureaucracy. She was also to prepare the agenda for regular weekly staff meetings and work to keep channels of communication clear with the Evaluating Team, City College, and the Advisory Service as well as the staff.

Because the Workshop is a centralized project of the New York City Board of Education under the Reimbursable Programs Office, fulfillment of all Board of Education procedures was required. At the risk of sounding like the song "If I were King of the Forest" from the *Wizard of Oz*, I suggest that there must be an easier way to fulfill the requirements. Enormous amounts of key Workshop staff time had to be spent on procedural matters devoid of any relation to content. Yet in only seven months of operation it is apparent that the Workshop has real potential for making a significant contribution toward humanizing public school education in New York City. The appropriation for the Center, while considerable, is modest compared with the tax-levy amounts for public school personnel who are using the services of the Workshop and carrying their enthusiasm and new insights into their work in the schools.

It therefore seems reasonable, with projects such as these, to work out a system for steering non-Board staff through the complicated machinery of the Board. It should be possible to assign Board staff persons whose specific task would be this arranging of procedural matters for unorthodox

but desirable new programs. In this way each new program seeking the means to become operative (after having completed successfully the arduous task of finding funds) would not repeat the trial and error method used by the previous new program to weave a way through the bureaucracy. In the case of the Workshop, this work has been more difficult than winning the grant.

If the Board has no funds for such personnel, I can well imagine that a foundation would be willing to back a program for interns seeking a future in government administration. What is required is flexible individuals unwilling to take "no" for an answer when they know that the unravelling of a technical detail, such as procuring supplies, will help improve school life for New York City's children. Part of the job of such staff would be to find the Board people who still remember that children are the reason for it all. They could give these people a sense of importance in crashing through with a solution of some arrangement looked on as impossible by those Board staff who are literal in their interpretation of rules. Every new program should not have to find its way through the maze alone; instead someone with experience should be a guide.

Tidy work packages could not possibly hold the wide spread of activity of a place like the Workshop Center. Surprise packages are a necessity in open education. One secretary is a gifted craftsman; she frequently helps out on craft workshops and is setting up the clay workshop. Another secretary is frequently at work in the darkroom helping novice Workshop photographers. I had myself a happy afternoon setting up the Workshop kitchen, using graphs and posters from a cooking workshop as display.

All staff take turns taking attendance and receiving guests, as well as going out to speak in schools interested in open education. Everyone involved at the Center, staff and participants, is urged to share interesting material and talents.

Sometimes all this flexibility can cause growing pains. Sometimes housekeeping becomes a chore. None of us after all grew up in open classrooms so we are continually pushing ourselves to find new ways to function. Yet we have enough moments at the Workshop when we feel we are "harmonizing." And in our moments of difficulty we can always

read appreciative letters (of which some excerpts appear below) from Workshop participants who give us the sense that we are becoming coordinates, that is, that we are beginning "to act together in a smooth concerted way."

"...Experiencing a new idea, working at it with my own hands, and seeing it come to fruition became a wonderfully repeated cycle for me at almost every exhibit I encountered. Having teachers experience precisely the feeling of discovery they are to extend to their students manifests the very essence of education. The concept, as you have shown, can be extended from Reading to Photography, Science to Arts and Crafts, and each of the exhibits enables any visitor to see for himself how well this is done. Even the aides show the patience and understanding, friendliness and cooperation that we as teachers must incorporate into our classroom technique...."

Richard J. Liscinsky
Teacher of Corrective Math

"...The teachers who participate in the workshop activities at the Center return to school filled with enthusiasm. They bring back ideas and activities which they utilize successfully in their classrooms. These supportive instructional services are extremely valuable...."

William C. Saunders
Community Principal, PS 145M

"...The Workshop Center and its many fine programs have provided the inspiration and support that teachers must have as they face their recognized need for almost total re-education. Only by such re-training will they be able to learn the art of guiding their students in a more dynamic way of discovery and learning. May your good work continue."

Louise Craig
Teacher, Theodore Roosevelt School

Some questions about values

Claryce Lee Evans

The following is excerpted from THOUGHTS ON TEACHER CENTERS AND OPEN EDUCATION. *The author is an Advisor with the Follow Through Project of the Education Development Center in Newton, Mass., and a student at the Harvard Graduate School of Education where this paper was prepared in June 1971.*

Our society usually acknowledges no responsibility to provide free opportunities for people to continue to learn new things--to continue to grow--with the infrequent exception of people who are defined as a "problem." There are some training programs and courses for the unemployed and for people in prisons. Teacher centers are another exception. The free service which they offer for the continued personal and professional growth of teachers, however, is not directed exclusively or even primarily at "problem" teachers. There is no attempt to restrict the use of the centers to those individuals for whom its "usefulness" can be documented.

Related to that lack of responsibility on the part of society is a lack of expectation. There is little expectation in our society that people will do voluntary work. Teacher centers set a different expectation for teachers both by offering unconditional services and by emphasizing voluntary programs.

In essence, we in open education are trying to accept people, teachers and children, for who they are and want to be rather than for what we hope to make them become. Our view is inconsistent with the goals of most schools, and even of some educational reform, as highlighted in David

Hawkins's criticism of curriculum reform:

> The futurism I see in much present thinking accepts the child only as future adult, and the adult only as contributing to, or anyway acquiescing in, a world of wholly adult affairs.

He might have written just as critically of our society for it demands not only that children grow up, quickly, to be adults, but that they grow up to be adults which the society defines as economically productive. As Andrew Hacker has pointed out, our society has little patience with the old, the mentally ill, criminals, or with unmarried or deserted mothers.

We are concerned with encouraging the natural curiosity of teachers and children. We try to support them when they ask questions or find answers which have not occurred to us. We try to encourage them to reach their own conclusions rather than ours. Teacher centers have begun to encourage teachers to think independently and to have some control over the physical aspects of their classrooms, the activities that take place there, and the educational climate. Though most of us have come to recognize that most schools are not places which encourage children to think, we have been less aware that schools also do not encourage teachers to think. There is no discussion, for example, in reports from teacher centers, of teachers encouraged by a center in their questioning and redefining of education, who then find themselves in trouble in their schools. It is hard to believe, however, that it has not happened. For the boundaries set by schools on what teachers are expected to think are rigid. (In my experience those expectations are enforced in different ways in city schools and suburban schools--as are the expectations for children--but they exist in both cases.) Teachers are expected to think of how to make their classrooms better and how to assure that children learn. They are not expected to consider the ridiculousness of the routines and rules.

Teacher centers also support cooperation among teachers. Teachers are encouraged to relate to each other, to rely on each other, and to learn from each other. Such an approach runs counter to the competitive spirit that pervades many of our institutions, not only business-related ones, but others--hospitals, universities, and research centers.

Similarly, teacher centers implicitly challenge

the spectator quality of much of American life. People participate in rather than watch activities in the centers, as is evident in reports of workshops on construction, mathematics, candle-making, and science, among others. There are few records of lectures. Films are being made, but those films are being made for people who want to study children carefully, not for easy viewing. Such a concept of entertainment and learning is obviously different from that of children's educational television and professional football games on television.

Teacher centers also challenge the division of work according to accepted sex roles. There is a tendency in teacher centers to expect men and women to do things which are usually viewed as only appropriate for the opposite sex. Though it is not explicitly stated whether women lead construction workshops, it is clear that they participate in them and that men participate in candle-making, weaving, and movement sessions. There is a sharp contrast between such expectations for teachers and the messages they receive from advertisements on television and in magazines.

In other ways the expectations of our society are contradicted by the structures and assumptions of open education. "The integrated day," which is sometimes used as a synonym for "open education," offers activities and choices to a child that are not divided into distinct subject areas or separated into work and play. Children choose and make sense of their activities for themselves. However, few if any adults in our society live in that way. Most of us distinguish between work and recreation, and many of us are also forced to acknowledge that there is a difference between the work we do and the work we see as most needing to be done. We have "jobs" rather than meaningful, useful work.

The integrated day for the child is not separated into physical and mental activity, nor into reflection and action. We accept that crafts, constructions, and other activities usually designated as "physical" have equal value with "mental" activities. But the salaries of janitors or farm workers compared with executives, intellectuals, or the professional staff of teacher centers do not reflect an acceptance of that value system in the larger society.

Implication of Inconsistencies

Not everyone in open education would agree with the preceding observations. I would argue, however, that, even so, we should be considering and explicitly discussing the relationship of what we are doing to some larger context. We need, if possible, to guard against the disillusionment that some of us experienced in curriculum development and also to deepen our understanding of the implications of the task we have chosen for ourselves.

Two examples from our work in mathematics and science curriculum development illustrate the complexity underlying the problem and the task that teacher centers confront. We first went into classrooms not because we wanted to change or study schools or classrooms, or even because we understood that there was anything to study. We wanted and needed to try our curriculum ideas on real children, and schools were an easy and convenient place to find children. We found, though, that schools were unpleasant places. They were more dreary and coercive than we thought necessary. We discovered that if children were free to find their own ways of solving problems, if they shared the fun and intellectual excitement that we found in mathematics, it was hard to make them stop talking to each other. We also found, given our goal of getting them to enjoy as well as to understand mathematics, that we could not, with much conviction, force them to "pay attention." But, we did not have--did not invent--at first, any real options for them if they were simply sitting in their seats being unoccupied or bored.

The experience for some people working on science curriculum was even more compelling. One *can* arrange to fit the study of pendulums into the daily schedule of a fifth grade class, but if one wants to allow children to follow the life cycle of a butterfly the schedule has to go. The moment of emergence of the butterfly from the chrysalis cannot be predicted or controlled. One has to fact facts: the chances are that the butterfly will emerge during spelling, math, or reading.

So we began to realize that it was less possible to isolate mathematics teaching or science teaching from the rest of what went on in classrooms than we had assumed. And, as we went into schools for significant periods of time each

day, we began to dread the hostility and cruelty we saw. We began to think-feel that stopping it had priority over developing an exciting mathematics/science curriculum. So we began to consider how we might work in classrooms in more integrated ways.

Later, as some of us were hired as consultants to schools or school systems, we began to see our ideas in operation in classrooms. We started to spend more time watching or talking with teachers and less time teaching. We saw that ideas we had helped develop were now in textbooks, mixed in with one or two ideas from each of the other mathematics projects and a collection of problems of a more traditional type. Almost without exception, those ideas were adopted in textbooks in ways that ignored what we thought had been the power, the mathematical point of the idea. Also, the teacher had a teacher's manual and each child had a textbook. The questions had been turned into algorithms, which was one of the things we had tried hardest to avoid. Another of the things we had tried hard to do was to invent problems which children could work on together. We had tried to find problems to which any child in the class could contribute some part of the solution--in which guesses and wrong guesses could be put to good use. But we found that children were expected to work on problems individually at their desks rather than being able to cooperate on one problem. More importantly we saw a problem behind the one we had set out to solve. We saw that the teacher had had no choice in the selection of the textbook series, and often clearly did not understand the book or resented having to use it.

Similar experiences on the part of some people led to their giving credence to the idea of a teacher-proof curriculum. For others it led to the idea of giving most of the responsibility for curriculum development to the teachers who would be using it. In either case, it forced us to redefine the task we had set for ourselves.

We need to think, therefore, not only about particular practices for teacher centers--whether they are effective, whether they are consistent with what we would like to see happen in classrooms--but also about a broader definition or broader context for teacher centers.

New alliances for the primary schools

Lore Rasmussen

The following is drawn from Part III of a speech given at the invitation of the Third Inter-American Conference on Mathematical Education held at Bahia Blanca, Argentina on November 21, 1972. Parts I and II will appear in future issues of Notes. *The author is co-director of the Durham School in Philadelphia.*

While my special concern is mathematics education, I know it can only flourish where there are enough good schools, well-trained teachers, and well-fed, healthy children. No country has achieved that basic condition yet. Thus the job ahead is a difficult one requiring simultaneous attacks on many fronts.

While we build enough schools, we must recruit and train the best young adults to teach in them. While we train the teachers, we must revitalize the teacher training institutions. While we revitalize the teacher training institutions, we must make the total population more education-conscious so that governments from the national to the local level will make mass quality education their most urgent priority.

This job seems overwhelming with the means and manpower that exist when each of these needs is seen separately--and old definitions of teacher, school, teacher training, and curriculum are applied. But there is an alternative model for education that is inbred into our cultures. It is the system of apprenticeships as applied both to the fisherman's son and the medical intern in the hospital. We all know how it works in the crafts, sciences, or business.

Cooks need their kitchens, physicists their laboratories, agriculturists their fields, craftsmen their workshops. Each has his respective tools and raw materials. They simultaneously learn the techniques and solve the problems in their specialties under the guidance of masters. Behind every successful cake baked, Nobel prize won, strain of seed developed, bridge safely built or bowl beautifully sculpted, lie countless efforts that failed, energies usefully spent over long periods of time on becoming better though rarely perfect.

Our schools are more like impersonal factory assembly lines than like personal apprenticeship training. Many children never succeed because the offerings are not suitable to them, are too meager or are too uninspiring. Too often the rich culture of our societies has long been shut out of the primary school room.

We must completely rethink the concept of teacher, school, curriculum, teacher training, community resources and the needs of learners--to succeed in educating our children mathematically as well as in other areas.

The definition of teacher must change.

If it is true that the young child learns best by doing mathematics, solving problems of the real world, then we must utilize the mathematical skills of the working world which surround every school. The merchant with his scales, the carpenter with his measuring tape and T square, the road builder with his surveying instruments, the nurse with her thermometer and height and weight chart--all are potential teachers of the young. They must be resource teachers from whom both teachers and children learn. In the same way we can little afford to overlook the intuitive mathematics employed by the mother who sews, cooks, or trades in the marketplace or the father who farms, fishes, works in the factory or as a shoemaker.

By first acknowledging and then organizing these community resources, we begin to bridge the gulf between book learning and home world, give a sense of dignity to both child and parent, bring new knowledge to both the schoolroom and the home.

Older children are often the best teachers for the young. Cross-age teaching has been eminently successful in the United States where tried and is as beneficial to the older child as it is to

the young. Thus, with community involvement and the use of older children as tutors and assistants, individualization and small group teaching can become a reality.

The place where children learn must be examined.

The congestion of a typical classroom is stifling for learning when not alternated with other learning spaces. This is true in every subject matter area but especially in mathematics which deals with space, shape, size, number, measurement, movement, and topology. Children taking frequent neighborhood trips become more observant of their own familiar surroundings, collect data, observe patterns, make maps, measure distances and speeds, and bring back collections of man-made and natural things.

The schoolyard itself is often times an ideal instructional area: its ground the largest surface to make diagrams on, its area to be measured, pattern games to be played, shadows to be studied.

What needs to be learned and how it is learned must be examined.

If in expanding educational opportunities to *all* our children, we continue to use as a measure of what should be learned, a uniform predetermined curriculum established (though not necessarily fitting) for the economic elite, we will fail. Then we will need to continue rote learning enforced by fear of examination failure, thus condemning the vast majority of children to becoming another generation of under-educated, underemployed citizens.

Children whose self-image is already poor, to whose family schools are an alien experience, need to have a curriculum built around their own life cycle. Answers to such elemental questions as: Who am I? Where did I come from? How did I get there? Who is here with me? What can we do together? What is surrounding us? suggest an organic approach to education adaptable to any location. There are hundreds of mathematical topics embedded in these simple questions.

The first question, "Who am I?", alone leads to the collection of personalized data of age, height, weight, footprints, size of clothing, measurements of strength, endurance, or speed. It includes size of family, and order of birth, to name just a few.

The question "What can we do together?" suggests sorting and grouping games by children. If we arrange the children present by 2's, by 3's, by n--will there be any left over? Thirty children each wiggling 10 fingers make a good model for 300 ones. Thirty children each clasping two hands together changed the 300 ones to 30 tens. How many clasped hands can we make out of 7 + 9 wiggly fingers?

No elimination of textbooks is suggested here. However, they should not be considered the total mainstay of the curriculum. Some of the best models for the development of local interest booklets for rural areas on mathematics and science are the regionally written series of the African Primary Science Program, particularly the booklet, *Ourselves, Activities and Experiments.*[1]

If we accept that apprentice programs are good for learning trades, the professions, farming, and business, then we must reintroduce their pedagogy back into the schools and retrain teachers to appreciate learning by involving the hand and the mind simultaneously. Where children are malnourished, food preparation and eating must become a part of the curriculum. It abounds in mathematical learnings. Where children need to get better health habits this also must be taught in the schools. We no longer can shirk these responsibilities. Sewing, embroidery, weaving, besides their utilitarian and artistic value, are experiences in applied mathematics.

New ways must be found to prepare primary teachers.

Regional training centers staffed by pedagogues in combination with craftsmen, artists, engineers, and unskilled community representatives are needed to retrain and train teachers to meet the demands of the new schools. Workshops, kitchens, laboratories, studios need to be provided at such a center, each with a specialist to assist the teacher in residence so she can learn new practical skills. Discussions and analysis of the applications of knowledge to bettering life in the community grow naturally in such training centers. Courses on new methods of teaching and new content can be given to teams of teachers from a locality. Each of them then sets up its own mini-training center in its community.

[1] This booklet is available through the Education Development Center, Newton, Mass.

These centers even might cross national boundaries in the less populated regions--addressing themselves particularly to needs and resources of geographically similar locations: altiplano, coast, farm regions, etc. Staffs of various teacher training institutions would also serve as residency staff there, meeting new colleagues, becoming infected with new ideas which they then would carry back to their home institutions.

New bridges must be built between the faculties of our universities and the primary schools.

More and more the professors of mathematics, science, and other fields of the universities need to be encouraged to involve themselves actively in the schools for young children. In the United States reputable mathematicians such as Professors Peter Hilton, Andrew Gleason, Paul Rosenbloom, and Hassler Whitney of Cornell, Harvard, Columbia, and Princeton respectively, among others, have given much voluntary time to teaching children. They have given much encouragement to teachers by their actions. This link must be strengthened and in our country it is the mathematicians who led the way.

If the teacher and the community cannot come to the retraining center, let the center come to the school.

Mobile units, traveling mathematics-science laboratories in busses or trailers can come into a neighborhood or the schoolyard, perhaps, and stay a week or more. During the school day they can serve children; after school hours they may be open for teachers and adults.

They are mini-classrooms for demonstrating new materials *and* at the same time workshops for building teaching aids out of local materials.

College students might contribute a year of service to the country in a "teacher corps."

Young people intending to become professionals may be encouraged to give six months to a year's service in outlying areas to supplement the offerings of the schools. In the United States we have this organized as "Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA)." It is the Peace Corps idea but on the local level. These young people become resource people in the communities, learn about other cultures of their own country, might staff the mobile units, free teachers to attend

training courses, and learn very realistically that there are social and economic problems yet to be solved.

My colleagues and I in the city of Philadelphia have tried to accomplish some of these aims. We created a new kind of urban school as part of the public school system. We are now in our third year and our example has given courage to others in the United States and abroad.

I like to call our school an inter-age "womb to tomb" school. It is a combination neighborhood community school primarily for children from three weeks to 14 years of age with a strong component of teacher, paraprofessional and parent education built into it. This school community is comprised of six interrelated units:

1. A program for 12-to 14-year-old expectant mothers who get academic and child care education simultaneously.

2. An infant and toddler day care nursery for their babies and the babies of working mothers.

3. A nursery school for 3-and 4-year-olds.

4. An elementary school for 5-to 12-year-olds.

5. A voluntary parent and teacher center for independent study and organized courses for local parents and teachers from other schools of the city. This center is open into the evening.

6. A strong internship and work-study program for high school students, college undergraduate and graduate students, who spend the year with us in training and receive full credit from their own institutions of learning.

Inside the building life is conducted as in a small village. Though professional teachers are in charge of the learning of the children, parents, trainees, volunteers, older children also teach. All learn from one another. Age groups are deliberately mixed within a two to three year span.

The basement and second floor of the building house shared community resources such as workshops, kitchens, mathematics laboratory, parent-teacher center, library and lounge. Here the age groups mix and work together, while on the first and third floors are the private home spaces for

the various age groups.

Emphasis is on a mixture of academic learning, play and work experiences. All building renovations, playground construction, most furniture and learning aids are made by the people of the community itself as part of this education. Parents cook for the children; children also cook and sew. Much mathematics learning takes place as the children work with their hands. Skillful teachers see that this is utilized in the more formal learning periods. Currently one group of 8-and 9-year-olds is studying algebra, another one Euclidean geometry, another one arithmetic through functions. Practical experiences with mathematics come as they are harvesting apples in an orchard, selling them to the community, making jam, cider and apple cakes and other delicacies.

Most of the children are from families of very low income. The school is located in a deteriorating neighborhood in the heart of the city but the spirit of its life, the academic success of its children, is so contagious that a long waiting list exists from upper middle class families who would like their children to enter.

Not only are the children thriving but so are their teachers and parents. Adults work long hours but feel that they are continuously learning. Teacher training institutions and the general academic community are watching us as a model for school change. Our children spend much of their time learning in the city at large. We redefined who is a teacher, widened the physical space of where one learns, broke down the barriers between school learning, work and play. We are gratified that talented young adults are coming to learn with us who never before would have considered becoming primary teachers. They see how intellectually stimulating and emotionally rewarding a school for young children can be.

A school like ours costs no more than the typical American school. Its teacher training component is cheaper than the usual pattern. By combining education of children, teacher education, and a rich program of adult education, the primary teacher feels no longer alone and at the lowest rung of the professional ladder.

A recent comprehensive study by UNESCO, headed by Edgar Faure of France, on future educational needs throughout the world, seems to support the kind of educational model presented here. According

to the *New York Times* of October 1, 1972, "the commission favored making education at all stages more accessible, far less structured and reliant on formal tests, degrees and even school buildings, and more closely related to the learners' own interests and events in the 'real' world beyond the classroom."

The language of mathematics is universally understandable to all peoples. It needs no "interpreter" from culture to culture. The *teaching* of mathematics, however, is of a different nature: when at its best, mathematics education is highly specific and integral to the resources and needs of the particular locality. It must be transferred from society to society with great care and thoughtfulness--but always with the love of children in mind.

An advisor's notes

Nancy Schaffer

Our school, PS 75, is now in its fifth year in the Open Corridor program. A dynamic, interactive, and self-initiating program has evolved. My input has become an integral part of the teacher's and the class's ongoing effort. Where the teacher has assumed the initiative for open education and has a strong sense of direction there is no clear line between where my input begins or ends in the classroom or corridor. It is more of a meshing and supporting role, sometimes initiated by the teacher and abetted by me, sometimes suggested by me and implemented by the teacher. Nowhere is this more true than in developing and expanding expressive activities.

The bilingual second-grade class, together now for two years, is a case in point. The thread that runs through the two years with greatest consistency has been a deep involvement with block building among the boys in the class. At first the teacher kept trying to rescue the Cuisenaire rods and the pattern blocks for math activities. The boys, left to their own devices, were incorporating everything that resembled blocks into their buildings. Later, as the teacher and I saw how intense this interest and involvement was, we began to gather as many miniature blocks, toy vehicles and tracks as we could collect for them, and we set aside, at least for a time, plans to introduce wooden units for concrete math experiences. These children, it was becoming clear, realized their world best by recreating it in block constructions.

At one point, in an effort to extend the quality of the children's block building, the teacher and I prepared a large oil cloth map, on which we taped appropriate roadways and subway lines. We hoped the children would build on the map, label appropriate streets, and position buildings they knew, thereby reconstructing the neighborhood immediately surrounding the school. The map was

politely used for a brief period. The scale was wrong for the children, however. So they discarded it, but accepted the idea, and then went ahead and constructed the neighborhood on the scale of their seven-year-old, egocentric outlook, which is something the teacher and I should have anticipated. The school and playground were 10 times larger than any other block in the neighborhood. The nearby subway station was the most dominating feature of their subway system. Their scale was based on personal significance. Disproportionate and unbalanced as it was as an overall picture, it was nevertheless accurate in the remarkable detail of the selected buildings and areas that were important to the children in their daily experiences. To insist upon actual scale or upon a more objective outlook would have been meaningless at this stage of their thinking.

To help them focus on details, I encouraged the teacher to arrange a number of mini-trips around the school building and yards and to the subway station one block away. The trips helped them to focus on the names of the streets, the traffic signs and signals, and the various types of stores and buildings on the block that separated the school from the subway. At one point their understanding of "uptown" and "downtown" sides of the subway seemed very vague. This, coupled with their rather primitive attempts to build a bridge, led me to take three boys on a trip. We first went to the subway station for a careful look around. Then we took two trains to the bus terminal at the George Washington Bridge, rode back and forth over the bridge in a bus, had frankfurters and drinks at a lunch counter at the terminal, and returned to school on the subway.

Transfers, turnstiles, elevators, escalators, and the lunch counter heightened the experience. One incident in which one child tried to push all the way around in a revolving subway gate impressed the word EXIT indelibly on his mind. He had an anxious wait on the exit side, where he had trapped himself, until he could be retrieved through the entrance again.

Back at school, these experiences were recreated in elaborate, labeled, block structures, and in long excited narratives. One boy dictated a story about the trip, two others wrote their own. One of the latter had entered the bilingual class from an English-speaking class three months before. At that time he was a nonreader and a serious be-

havior problem. Extended opportunities to work with blocks not only calmed him but gave him an opportunity to become seriously involved. The block building and the chance to function in Spanish were the most salient features in his alteration.

One of the many things we have learned from the second grade block builders is that expressive activities have no clear boundary lines. Rather, they're the bridge builders between intake and insight. Social understandings, language development, and concept formation all occur in expressive activity.

The advisor in an open corridor school is a liaison person, connecting teachers and classes to outside resources and to parents, teachers, and administrators within the school community. In our school the Parents' Open Corridor Committee is a very active and supportive group. In making suggestions to parents last fall, I said, wistfully, "Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could have dress-up trunks on wheels to push out into the corridors for the classes to share?" In less than a month two large steamer trunks appeared. They were complete with costumes, capes, shoes, boots, hats, gloves, bags, scarves, and jewelry. They were mounted on wheels. They had all been collected and assembled by the chairman of the Parents' Corridor Committee. She also donated a full length mirror which I framed in tri-wall cardboard and which the children painted. A whole new area of expressive activity now flourished in the corridors. Impressed and excited by the romantic quality of the costumes (tutus, old evening gowns, chiffon scarves, a dramatic cape or two and a velvet jacket and cavalier hat), impromptu plays became a daily event.

On another occasion an enthusiastic visitor to the school sent us bolts of green printed fabric. It arrived just in time to be claimed for an upcoming first/second grade performance of *Midsummer Night's Dream*. The play's overworked teacher-impresario sent a distress call for help with costumes and scenery. Delighted to join the enterprise, I lent a hand. Sticking close to the production until the actual performance, I was able to add an extra dimension of support and thereby enhanced the whole venture. The teacher was freed to concentrate on helping children with their per-

formance. Children who were painting scenery and designing and sewing costumes had an opportunity to become involved in more elaborate work than they would have done on their own. The know-how and experience that they gained in this production will give them higher expectations for themselves and confidence in what they can do on their own next time.

Several deaths in the school and in school families this year caused great concern among the teachers about handling death with children. I worked with another advisor to arrange a meeting for the teachers with Professor Weber where we discussed ways of dealing with the topic. Shortly after the discussion a guinea pig died in a kindergarten classroom. The teacher encouraged the children to talk about their feelings and to think about what they could do to help remember "Samantha." The children wrote the following song:

Oh once we had a guinea pig
And her name was Samantha
We loved her
We'll miss our Samantha
Oh, once we had a guinea pig
But now she is dead.

The children, with the teacher's help, set the song to a melody and got the teacher to make copies for each child to take home. Samantha had been in the kindergarten for eight years and so all day children who had known her came to pay their respects. The kindergarten children sang their song to the visitors. Later on, when other pets died in the school, children followed this example and wrote songs and poems to express their loss and to help channel some of the feelings about death with which it is so hard to cope.

Another means of extending possibilities for expressive activities that I've used is that of providing books, gathering materials (begging, borrowing and buying), and offering workshops in art techniques. For example, a cluster teacher working with upper grade classes was eager to get into a photography project. I suggested she begin with photo-sensitive papers and try some photographic processes without cameras, since she had no cameras to begin with and I lent her a book, *Designing with Light*. When the teacher was into the project and ready for more advanced guidance, I steered her to the Workshop Center where a staff member

with extensive knowledge in photography helped her to develop her program. Many children became involved in the project; some worked on it for many months. When it came time for a final exhibition, I came back into the picture to help the teacher arrange an effective display.

Another cluster teacher has done an especially well-developed series of craft projects in weaving, stitchery, and quilting. I've acted as a resource, offering books, materials, and know-how when needed.

Workshops, both in the school and at the Workshop Center, have been arranged for teachers and paraprofessionals in papier mache, printing, resist processes, and cooking. Advisors alert teachers and paraprofessionals to opportunities to attend workshops in movement, music, and drama.

In addition to these efforts by advisors, there exists in the school a climate in which art is inspired by talented teachers and children. Displays of children's work abound and the obvious appreciation of their work invites children to do more. Paraprofessionals have initiated exciting projects in stitchery, sewing, quilting, collage, cooking, printing and singing. Parents come in to play instruments, teach crafts, and share cultural information, treasures, recipes and songs.

The evidence seems to be that where the school and the administration value expressive activities these will proliferate and grow. The real need is to be sure that children are being helped to focus on careful examination of their environment and experiences whether in terms of form or feeling, or both. Accessibility of materials and time to explore are important, but deep and growing involvement with examining the physical and social world and developing a personal response to it are the real ends of expressive activity.

A parent's view

Ruth Dropkin

THE THIRD SIDE OF THE DESK; How Parents Can Change the Schools by Hannah S. Hess. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973. 324 pages. $8.95.

PS 84 in Manhattan is a school distinguished by its Open Corridor design for open education and by its many thriving open classrooms. But only a few short years ago, this was not the case. The transformation that is evident today took place between 1967 and 1970 through a series of extraordinary events whose lessons and outcome need to be studied by all people concerned with making constructive change in the public school system. It is good, therefore, to have this personal account by one of the leading participants in the PS 84 upheaval, not only for its contribution to the record but also for the light it throws on the place of parents in the web of school relationships. Besides, the author has managed to make consistently absorbing what must surely be a blow-by-blow recall of three years of meetings, demonstrations, sit-ins, lockouts, and picket lines.

A graduate of New York City public schools, and for a short time a high school teacher, Hannah Hess was thoroughly alarmed by her renewed encounter with public schools as the mother of a kindergartner. What struck her most painfully was that with few exceptions, as she noted, teachers were treated as "interchangeable parts" by administrators who gave lip-service to a humanist approach to education, at the same time that they busied themselves mechanically maintaining order in their school. In her sketches of parent-teacher conferences and some of her class observations she laughs through her tears.

That this was the situation in a so-called "good" school was especially horrifying to Mrs. Hess as well as to a sizable number of kindred souls she discovered in the PA she had joined in the automatic way expected of proper middle class parents.

But where such a situation might typically have led to an endless round of fruitless gripe sessions, at PS 84 it was different. For one thing, a Parent Room was set up as a headquarters for serious planning, and it was stoutly defended against administration forays. As Mrs. Hess tells it, gradually the combined efforts of parents and teachers gave direction to change. The author remembers her feelings when she first read the teachers' proposal for what was, somewhat naively, called an "infant school":

> The afternoon marked a turning point for me. From that point on my activities had a focus. I was no longer merely criticizing those aspects of the school that I had felt, all along, were damaging, but I was now working toward something positive.

Determined to learn more about the open way of schooling, the parents enlisted the aid of Professor Lillian Weber as a consultant, ran films about English schools, and at all times actively supported those teachers working to change their classrooms. It took the threat of losing those innovative teachers, and even more, the teacher union strikes of 1967 and 1968, to convert Mrs. Hess from a standard Grey-Lady PA member to an agonized and obsessed leader of the PS 84 changeover. The intense teacher-parent cooperation that developed out of these crises gave both groups the spirit and the confidence to pursue the kind of changes they then knew to be essential: not only a change of leadership but also a change in the *quality* of education.

It may have been happenstance to some extent, or the mood of that era of militancy in the reform movement, or as the book makes abundantly clear, sheer hard work and stick-to-itiveness, but the PS 84 parents *did* achieve what they battled for: a principal willing and prepared to implement the Open Corridor and open classrooms; teachers helped (by the City College Advisory Service) to move toward open education; parents intimately and intelligently involved in the school's changes; and most of all, children given an alternative to traditional school ways.

Teachers, who are moving to open their classrooms, know that the achievement of change cannot be the task of the teacher alone, that parents and administrators must be partners in that change. This book is a convincing reminder of that wisdom.

Center publications

EVALUATION RECONSIDERED
A position paper and supporting documents on evaluating change and changing evaluation

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Part Three
DOCUMENTS
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Visiting Committee Report: Vine School

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FIASCOS
The Demands of Bureaucracy
Daniel Guttman

78 pages. Single copies free on written request.

ALSO AVAILABLE

EXPLORATIONS OF VISUAL PHENOMENA by Eleanor Dimoff. An approach to the mathematics of size and distance relationships. In color.

READING FAILURE AND THE TESTS by Deborah Meier. Second printing of widely-acclaimed critique of standardized reading tests.

October 1972 and *March 1973* issues of *NOTES FROM WORKSHOP CENTER FOR OPEN EDUCATION*.

THE OPEN CORRIDOR PROGRAM. An Introduction for Parents. *EL PROGRAM DEL CORREDOR ABIERTO*. Spanish translation.

Stamped, self-addressed envelope should accompany requests for the following:

Three papers (mimeo):

Description of the Open Corridor Teacher
Steps in Setting up an Open Corridor Program
Open Corridor Classrooms

A current listing of *Summer Institutes for Open Education*.

July and September Calendars of Workshop Center activities.